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WEAR HUB RUBBERS

The IDYL of TWIN FIRES

WALTER PRICHARD EATON

SYNOPSIS.

CHAPTER I—I grow tired of my work as a college instructor and buy a New England farm on sight.

CHAPTER II—I inspect my farm and go to board at Bert Temple's. Bert helps me to hire a carpenter and a farmer.

CHAPTER III—Hard Cider, the carpenter, estimates the repairs and changes necessary on the house. Mike commences plowing. I start to prune the orchard trees.

CHAPTER IV—Hard Cider builds bookshelves around the twin fireplaces. Mrs. Temple hires Mrs. Filling for me as a housekeeper.

CHAPTER V—Stella Goodwin, a New York girl, comes as a boarder to the Temple's. I try to avoid her, but meet her in the pines at twilight and together we listen to the singing of the hermit thrush. I show her the twin fireplaces.

CHAPTER VI—Stella helps me with the flower garden around the house. We build a Roman arch for a rose trellis.

CHAPTER VII—We pick the paint for the rooms in the house, but Stella becomes angry at me when I leave her alone to select part of it. I build a sundial on the lawn.

CHAPTER VIII—We arrange my books in the cases and build twin fires in the fireplaces. At evening we go to the pines and hear the hermit thrush again.

(CONTINUED FROM LAST WEEK)

CHAPTER IX.

Action and Diana.

Memorial day dawned fair and warm. Bert and his wife and all their "help" went off to the village after breakfast. There were no painters in my house, and Mike had milked the cows and gone home before I arrived. Mike Goodwin and I seemed to have that little section of Benford quite to ourselves, after the last of the carryalls had rattled past, taking the veterans from Slab City to the town. Having no flag yet of my own, I borrowed one from Bert, and we hung it from a second-story window, facing the road, as our tiny contribution to the sentiment of the day. Then we tackled the rose trellis, speedily completing it, for only two arches remained to be built, one of the carpenters having built three for me the day before, while waiting for some shingles to come for the barn. Indeed, we had it done by ten o'clock.

"Now what?" said she. I looked about the garden. The roses had not yet come, so we couldn't very well plant them. I judged that the morning of a warm, sunny day was no time to transplant seedlings. The painting was not yet completed inside, so I could fix up no more of my rooms. The vegetable garden didn't appear to need cultivation. We couldn't paint the trellis, as there was no green paint.

"Good gracious!" I exclaimed, "this is the first time I've been at a loss for something to do. It's a terrible sensation."

"Couldn't we build a bird bath?" she suggested.

"Madam," said I, "you are a genius!"

"At the brook?" she asked.

"No, not the brook. I've a better idea," said I. "My plan is to put the bird bath on the east edge of the lawn, halfway between the house and the rose aqueduct, corresponding to the sundial in the center, and to a white bench which will be placed at the west side when the grape arbor is built."

"Approved," laughed Miss Goodwin.

We measured off the spot, and I mixed a lot of cement, laid it over thick, set the bottomless box frame down upon it, and built up the four sides. As the girl had no gloves, I would not allow her to handle the cement (for nothing cracks the skin

so badly, as I had discovered in my orchard work). But she kept busy mixing with the hoe, and handing me bricks. Some I broke and put in endwise, and I was careful to give all an irregular setting as possible, till the top was reached. Then, of course, I laid an even line of the best bricks all the way around, and leveled them carefully. We had scarcely got the last brick on when we heard Bert's carryall rattle over the bridge and Bert's voice yelling "Dinner!"

"Oh, dear!" That cement in the box will harden!" I cried. "Dump it all in!"

Then, mixing more cement I laid a square bowl, as it were, two inches deep, on the top of the little brick pile. We let it settle a few moments, and then carefully broke away the box. There stood the bird bath.

"Can we put water in it yet?" the girl asked.

"Surely," said I. "Cement will harden under water. And we'll plant climbing nasturtiums around it, too."

We passed through the house. The kitchen, dining room, and hall were finished, and the paint drying. They looked very fresh and bright. The south room, as we stepped into it, was flooded with sunlight and cheerful with rugs and books. Flinging wide the glass door, we stepped out upon the terrace of the pergola-to-be, and looked toward the new bird bath. Upon its rim sat a song sparrow! Even as we watched, another came and fluttered his feet and breast daintily through the trembling little mirror of water. Then came a robin and drove them

both away.

"The pig!" laughed Miss Goodwin. "Do you know, I've got a poorer opinion of robins since I came here. We city dwellers think of robins as harbingers of spring, and all that, and they epitomize the bird world. But when you really are in that world, you find they are rather large and vulgar—and sort of upper West side-y. They aren't half so nice as the song sparrows, or the Peabodies, and, of course, compared with the thrushes—well, it's like comparing Owen Meredith with Keats, isn't it?"

"Don't be too hard on the robins," I smiled.

We looked our fill at the new bird bath, which was already functioning, as she said her boss on the dictionary would put it, and at the white sundial pillar, and at our prospective aqueduct of roses, and at the farm and the far hills beyond—and then she suddenly announced with great energy that she was going to saw wood.

"You may saw just one piece," said I, "and then you are going to take a book and rest. I'm going to work, myself. Twin Fires is getting in shape fast enough now so I can give up part of the daytime to the purely mundane task of paying the bills."

I wheeled up a big dead apple branch from the orchard to the wood shed, put it on the buck, gave her the buck-saw, and watched her first efforts, grinning.

"Go away," she laughed. "You bother me."

So I went, opened the west window by my desk to the wandering summer breeze, and went at my toil. Presently I heard her tiptoeing into the room.

"Done?" said I.

She nodded. "Now I want—let's see what I want—well, I guess 'Marius the Epicurean' and 'Alice in Wonderland' will do. I'm going to sit in the orchard. You work here till five or your salary will be docked. Good-by."

I heard her go out by the front door, and then silence settled over the sun-filled, cheerful room, while I plugged away at my tasks. I don't know how long I worked, but finally my attention began to wander. I wondered if she were still in the orchard. I looked out upon the sweet stretches of my farm, with the golden light of afternoon upon it, and work became a burden. "Shall I ever be able to work, except at night, or on rainy days?" I wondered with a smile, as I tossed the manuscript I was reading into a drawer, and went out through the front entrance.

The girl was nowhere to be seen. "She's probably in her beloved pines," I reflected. "It would be a good time to clean out a path in the pines." I turned back to get a hatchet, and then went down toward the brook.

I trod as noiselessly as I could through the maples, thinking to surprise her at her reading, and took care in the pines not to step on any dead twigs. She was nowhere to be seen near the upper end of the grove, but as I advanced I heard a splashing louder than the soft ripple of the brook, and suddenly around a thick tree at a bend in the stream, where the brook ran out toward the tamarack swamp in the corner of my farm, I came upon her. She had her shoes and stockings off, and with her skirts held high she was wading with solemn, quiet delight in a little pool. Her back was toward me. I could have discreetly retreated, and she been none the wiser. But, alas! Acton was neither the first nor the last of his sex. The water rippled so coolly around her white ankles! The sunlight dappled down so charmingly upon her chestnut hair! And I said, with a laugh, "So that is why you wanted me to work until five o'clock!"

She turned with a little exclamation, the color flaming to her cheeks. Then she, too, laughed, as she stood in the brook, holding her skirts above the water.

"Consider yourself turned to a stag," she said.

"All right," I answered, "but don't stay in that cold water too long."

"If I do it will be your fault," she smiled, with a sidelong glance. Then she turned and began wading tentatively downstream. But the brook deepened suddenly, and she sank almost to her knees, catching her skirts up just in time. I withdrew hastily, and called back to her to come out. When I heard her on the bank, I brought her a big handkerchief for a towel, and withdrew once more, telling her to hurry and help me plan the path through the pines. In a moment or two she was by my side. We looked at each other. Her face was still flushed, but her eyes were merry. We were standing on almost the exact spot where we had first met. But now there seemed in some subtle wise a new bond of intimacy between us, a bond that had not existed before this hour. I could not analyze it, but I felt it, and I knew she felt it. But what she said was:

"I told you to work till five o'clock. 'It's half-past four,' I answered. 'Besides, you must have sent for me. Something suddenly prompted me to come out and hunt you up, at any rate.'"

"To say I sent for you is rather—

rather forward, under the circumstances, don't you think?"

"It might be—and it might not be," I answered. "Did you have a good time?"

"The best I ever had—till you spoiled it," she exclaimed. "Oh, the nice, cold brook! Now, let's build the path you spoke about once."

We went back to the maples, where the ground was open, and selected a spot on the edge of the pines where the path would most naturally enter. Then we let it wind along by the brook. When we reached the hayfield wall beside the house it was nearly six o'clock.

"Now, let's just walk back through it!" she cried. "Tomorrow we can bring the wheelbarrow, can't we, and pick up the litter we've made?"

"I can, at any rate, while you wade," said I.

She shot a little look up into my face. "I guess I'll help," she smiled.

In the low afternoon light we turned about and retraced our steps. There was but a fringe of pines along the southern wall, and as they were forty-year-old trees here the view both back to the house and over the wall into the next pasture was airy and open. Then the path led through a corner of the tamarack swamp where in wet weather I should have to put down some planks, and where the cattails grew breast high on either side. Then it entered the thick pine grove where a great many of the trees were evidently not more than fifteen or twenty years old and grew very close. The sunlight was shut out, save for daggers of blue between the trunks toward the west. The air seemed hushed, as if twilight were already brooding here. The little brook rippled softly.

As we came to the first crossing, I pointed to the pool, already dark with shadow, and said, "It was wrong of me to play Acton to your Diana, but I am not ashamed nor sorry. You were very charming in the dappled light, and you were doing a natural thing, and in among these little pines, perhaps, two friends may be two friends, though they are man and woman."

She did not reply at once, but stood beside me looking at the dark pool and apparently listening to the whisper of the running water against the stepping-stones. Finally she said with a little laugh, "I have always thought that perhaps Diana was unduly severe. Come, we must be moving on."

Once more we entered the pines, following the new path over the brook again to the spot where we first had met. There I touched her hand. "Let us wait for the thrush here," I whispered.

I could see her glimmering face lifted to mine. "Why here?" she asked. "Because it was here we first heard him."

"Oh, forgive me," she answered. "I didn't realize! The path has made it look different, I guess. Forgive me."

She spoke very low, and her voice was grieving. Did it mean so much to her? A sudden pang went through my heart—and then a sudden hot wave of joy—and then sudden doubts. I was silent. So was the thrush. Presently I touched her hand again, gently.

"Come," said I, "we have scared him with our chopping. He will come back, though, and then we will walk down the clean path, making no noise, and hear him sing."

"Nice path," she said, "to come out of your door, through your orchard, and wander up a path by a brook, through your own pines! Oh, fortunate mortal!"

"And find Diana wading in a pool," I added.

Again she shot an odd, questioning look at me, and shook her head. Then she ran into the south room and put the books back on the shelves.

"Which one did you read, Marius or Alice?" I asked.

"Neither," she smiled, as I looked the house behind us.

(To be continued.)

CALEDONIA COUNTY.

WEST BURKE

Mrs. Fletcher of Johnson was in town over Sunday.

Lyman Powers of Montreal visited in town recently.

Mrs. Nettie McCoy spent last week with her aunt in Barton.

Miss Mattie Dickerman was at home for a short visit last week.

Alfreda Copeland is spending a month in Livermore Falls, Me.

Mrs. Paul and daughter of Island Pond are visiting relatives in town.

Mr. and Mrs. Ray Spencer of Boston are visiting at Mrs. O. C. Spencer's.

Miss Abbie Burns has been visiting her aunt, Mrs. Angie Burns, of Newport.

Miss Bernice Roundy has gone to St. Johnsbury to work in the office of Dr. Ricker.

Mrs. James McFarland had her tonsils removed at St. Johnsbury Wednesday.

Hugh McFarland, who underwent an operation at his home recently, is improving.

F. W. Thompson of Newport was the guest of his sister, Mrs. Brockway, last week.

Miss Ethel Smith and niece, Delores, spent last week with friends in St. Johnsbury.

Several from West Burke attended the Chautauqua in Lyndonville the past week.

Miss Maude Bradlee of Concord, N. H., is the guest of her aunt, Mrs. J. B. Watchie.

Mrs. W. H. Rice has been seriously ill, but seems now to be on the road to recovery.

Fred Percival and family of Pike, N. H., were guests of Mr. and Mrs. C. H. Coburn Saturday.

G. A. Jamieson and family, who have been in Burlington for six weeks, are at home again.

The Misses Laila and Glenn Roundy have been camping with a party of friends in Newport.

Mrs. Mary Bailey returned Saturday from a two weeks' visit to relatives in Island Pond and Littleton, N. H.

Rev. and Mrs. Fred Johnson of East Westmoreland, N. H., were the guests of Mrs. Myrtle Hall over Sunday.

Mrs. Ann Randall of St. Johnsbury was the guest of Mr. and Mrs. Dale Donahue Wednesday of last week.

Mrs. Mary Packer, who has been with friends in Wisconsin for the past two years, has been visiting in town.

Mrs. Ada Silsby and daughter, Mabel, of St. Johnsbury spent the week-end with Mrs. M. E. Spencer.

WANTED—All the hens in Burke. 14 cents pound this week, f. o. b. Empty crops. Elrick, Barton. 32tf

Clayton Hitchcock and family, who have been visiting here, returned to their home in Indian Orchard Saturday.

Mrs. Florence March and little daughter of Mechanic Falls, Me., have been visiting at Mrs. Celia Buzzell's.

Dr. Burke and family and Mr. and Mrs. C. H. Coburn took an auto trip through Maine and New Hampshire the last week.

Mr. and Mrs. Warren Drown and Mr. and Mrs. Ezra Chappell took an auto trip to Hanover and Bradford, N. H., the first of the week.

Mr. and Mrs. Irving Woodruff of Washington, D. C., and Horace Woodruff of Bangor, Me., were the guests of Mrs. Ida Powers last week.

The third degree will be worked and refreshments served at the next regular meeting of the F. & A. M., Wednesday evening, September 6.

The Misses Helen and Alice Beckwith of Somerville, Mass., are visiting at N. S. and H. C. Colby's, Ernest Warren's and M. L. Fairbrother's.

Mrs. Louise Lucia celebrated her 87th birthday Thursday. A dinner was given in her honor at the home of her son, Joseph, in East Burke, at which all her children were present.

A reception was given to Mr. and Mrs. Dale Donahue at the G. A. R. hall Wednesday evening, and the young couple were presented with a fine clock. Refreshments of punch, cake and wafers were served, and most of the evening was spent in dancing.

Mr. and Mrs. Clarence Densmore of California have been spending the past two weeks with Mr. Densmore's mother at Willoughby lake. Mr. Densmore has gone to Boston where he has a position, and will be joined there by his wife, after she has visited relatives here.

SHEFFIELD

Mrs. Elliott is very sick and is being cared for by a trained nurse.

Helen Brown and son, Erwin, have been visiting friends in Canaan.

Baxter Pratt has gone to live with his daughter, Mrs. James McDowell.

Mrs. Herman Sheldon is enjoying a visit from her mother from Newport.

George Snelling of Bradford is visiting his daughter, Mrs. Charles Blake.

Theda Sheldon is enjoying a visit from her cousin from Newport Center.

S. A. Jones has been entertaining his sister and husband from Augusta, Me.

Eddie Sheldon was run into by an unknown car while coming from the fair and badly hurt.

Mrs. Snelling goes to Norwich to live with her daughter, Bertha, who has been visiting her.

Rev. Mr. Collins is doing a lot of repairing on the inside of the parsonage, a much needed piece of work.

Henry Marco's barn was struck by lightning Saturday night and burned with all its hay, two hogs, one calf and all the hens.

Anna Kendall of Newport made a short call at A. O. Gray's and J. S. Chesley's the first of the week in company with Arthur Moulton and family of Burlington.

SUTTON

Those who went to the beach have returned home.

Charlie Hall of St. Johnsbury has been visiting at C. B. Joy's.

Moody Belknap of Charleston has moved to the Ernest Phinfield farm.

Mrs. Don Wheeler visited her mother, Mrs. L. J. Hall, in Lyndon recently.

Mrs. Harriet Hudson of Southern Pines, N. C., is visiting relatives in town.

Mrs. Carrie Chase of Concord, N. H., is visiting her cousin, Miss Sadie Blake.

Mrs. Bessie Sanborn has gone to work for George Hubbard at East Burke.

Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Willis and Mr. and Mrs. Alec Annis visited at C. E. Coburn's Wednesday.

The civil board met at the town clerk's office Saturday to revise the check list. They meet again in two weeks.

Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Robbins and three children, Miss Sadie Spear and Orett Robinson of Maine are visiting at W. N. Robinson's.

Harold Mitchell, who boards at Ed. Brown's, is sick with typhoid fever. Miss Ethel Butson, a trained nurse from St. Johnsbury, is caring for him.

SUTTON NORTH RIDGE.

Leo Black is working at Pisgah Lodge.

Mrs. Mabel Hovey is visiting in St. Johnsbury.

Walter Buck and family have moved into George Rice's house.

Mr. Horn of Rochester, N. H., is visiting at E. E. Grant's.

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